

Community Connectivity Consortium



Board Meeting MINUTES

Date: September 8, 2022

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance

Bob Potts-King County, Donna Gaw -City of Kirkland, Chelo Picardal-City of Bellevue, Noah Pitzer -University of Washington, Young Yoon-City of Renton, David Travis - City of Auburn, Jay Gray, Renton School District

C3 Members in Attendance

Jim Levy – Valley Medical Center, Dennis Cook – UW, Jason Golec – Bellevue School District, Thomas Fichtner – City of Federal Way, Tommy Lee – King County

Other Invitees in Attendance:

Chantal Virgile – Federal Communications Commission, Guest Speaker, Doug Mah – PNWGP, Jeff Steffens – City of Sumner

Introductions/Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chelo Picardal at 11:02 AM
Paul Dunn noted that a **quorum** is present.

Guest Speaker

Chelo Picardal introduced and welcomed the guest speaker for the meeting; Chantal Virgile of the Federal Communications Commission.

Chantal shared a presentation on the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

The ACP provides financial assistance to households meeting certain requirements to grant a discount of up to \$30 per month (up to \$100 per month for households on tribal lands) for broadband internet service, and up to \$100 towards qualifying equipment from participating providers. Chantal described the application process and introduced resources for outreach to the public.

Following Chantal's presentation, questions and answers were discussed;

Chelo asked which carriers are participating in the program. Chantal described how to find the list of providers, and noted that it is a large list that includes many smaller carriers who we may not really know about.

Bob Potts – Noted that King County has been tracking participation in the program, and that approximately 46,000 households have applied. He noted that the downside is that this is not a high participation rate based on the number of eligible households. Bob asked what tools are available to increase the participation rate. **Chantal** said that the FCC's outreach program is the primary method and that some providers themselves have advertised this program.

Bob Potts said that King County is working on the second phase of their outreach effort including targeted mailings and other focused outreach. Bob noted that the program has approximately \$12 Billion dollars left, and that the rate of participation will determine how long funds remain available. Bob referred to an ACP dashboard available from the Institute of Self Reliance that forecasts that at the current participation rate, funding will run out in early 2024. <https://apps.communitynets.org/acpdashboard/> **Bob** noted that 60% of the funding is being applied to Mobile Broadband, which seems to diverge from the original focus of the plan, and asked if this is seen as a challenge to the program. **Chantal** noted that while service discounts are available, not all households have access to a device like a laptop or desktop, and that many households consider their primary internet access devices to be their mobile devices. **Bob** mentioned other county efforts addressing digital equity (BEAD, etc.), and **Chantal** recommend that we watch for further grant opportunities coming. Regarding funding, **Chantal** said that the uptake rates and outreach efforts can begin to address the overall need and bring it to the attention of policy makers.

Approve Minutes from the May 12, 2022 General Membership and Board Meeting

- Approve Minutes from May 12, 2022 Board Meeting
- Motion: *Move to approve Minutes of the May 12, 2022 Board Meeting*

Moved By: **Donna Gaw**

Seconded: **David Travis**

Approved: **Yes** - No **Motion Carried Unanimously**

Board Action

3. Fiscal Report and Budget

Chelo Reviewed the 2022 Year to Date Report, noting that the report is through July 31. August has not yet closed. The budget is in good shape and reserves are healthy as well. We are running under budget and the reserve is growing.

Chelo Picardal

C3 Project Agreement 80

Chelo introduced PA 80 and reviewed its scope, budgeted cost and the participants in the project.

Paul reviewed the agreement, opt in period, budget, and scope. **Paul** forwarded the Operations Committee's recommendation to the Board for approval.

At the C3 May 2022 General Membership and Board Meeting, the board approved proceeding with a proposed uplift project to 1GB services, providing 10 GB services to C3 Members.

Project Agreement 80 has been drafted, and at the August 17, 2022 C3 Operations Committee Meeting, the Committee recommended Project 80 be submitted to the C3 board for approval.

Donna Gaw asked about costs to each agency and what the process for final approval looks like. **Paul** said that the Project Agreement will be ready for participants' approval following Board Approval at this meeting, and that each participant should sign according to their organizations financial and approval policies.

*Chelo Picardal
Board Action*

This project agreement retires C3 1 GB services, uplifts existing 1 GB services to 10 GB, adds 10 GB services for "Project Eligible" C3 members who have opted in, and establishes C3 service terms and pricing for 10 GB services.

Motion: *Move to approve Project Agreement 80 for C3 Participation and issue Project Agreement 80 to listed participants for approval.*

Moved By: **David Travis**

Seconded: **Thomas Fichtner**

Approved: **Yes** - No **The motion carried unanimously**

Ring Activity/Operations Committee Report

Dennis Cook presented the Quarterly Ring Activity Operations Report. There were no unplanned outages or C3 service interruptions.

Dennis Cook

EastRail Update

Information on RFI process

RFI Submittals have been received

RFI Report has been submitted to King County Council, RAC and Stakeholders

Following reviews, information can be released – expected in October, 2022

Bob Potts

Project Grant Funding Programs Discussion

Chelo introduced a conversation on infrastructure grant opportunities, and noted that Bellevue has formed an interdepartmental working group to investigate BIL grants, mainly focused on transportation and smart cities as well as fiber infrastructure.

Chelo reviewed some of the grant opportunities and resources that Bellevue is tracking:

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for cities (wacities.org)

Washington Statewide Broadband Act – Washington State Department of Commerce Broadband Office

Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD)

Middle Mile NOFO through the US Department of Commerce (NTIA)

Building a Better America through Whitehouse.gov

National League of Cities – Get ready to apply for Broadband Infrastructure Funding

FCC Outreach Grants available to enhance digital equity for local non-profits

Tommy Lee discussed King County's work on grants focusing mainly on federal grant opportunities. King County received an 11 million dollar first round Broadband Acceleration grant in partnership with Zippy fiber to build out and enhance last mile broadband connectivity to approximately 1100 homes in the Duvall area. WA State Broadband Office is soliciting comments and feedback for round two. King County will definitely be pursuing round two funding. **Tommy** noted that grant applications are reasonably simple provided you have all the information needed in the application available. King County will again be working on public-private partnerships since the county does not want to become an ISP. BEAD funding through NTIA is administered by the State, and should have already received their 5-million-dollar advance. Once the state submits their plan, they will work with local entities on distribution. The county is mainly focused on last-mile initiatives. **Bob and Tommy** discussed county by county Broadband Action Teams (BATS) and noted that Snohomish County has formed theirs and is active. BATS are to be more focused on Digital Equity actions. Tommy emphasized the need to learn more from the WA State Broadband office and start planning now. Get ready, there is a lot of money coming.

Chelo Picardal

Paul asked about the process used to select Zippy for the Duvall project, and how was Zippy selected? **Tommy** explained how incumbent providers were identified and selected. In the case of Duvall, Zippy was identified as the incumbent provider, which made the selection process simple. In other areas, the incumbent providers have not expressed interest, so this allowed the state and county to reach out to other providers to solicit their interest. Many of the grants have some matching requirements, and it is possible that the state may be able to assist. Private providers themselves cannot apply for grants, so they must partner with local governments.

Chelo asked if any members had questions or if any members are considering applying for middle mile opportunities. **Chelo** noted that many of these opportunities are multi-year, and that we are waiting for some of these programs to further solidify.

Paul noted that the US Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants, offered annually offer funding towards public safety related technology. **Chelo** noted that there is a Homeland Security Department grant opportunity coming for Cyber Security technology assistance.

Good of The Order

Chelo asked if any attendees had items for the good of the order to discuss and asked if anyone had suggestions for guest speakers at the December meeting. **Chelo** and **Bob** suggested that we invite Bob Masconi (sic) the new director to speak to C3. **Paul** will reach out to invite him.

All/Any

Adjourn – Chelo adjourned the meeting at 12:24 PM

Respectfully Submitted, Paul Dunn